

19054416

I917.7327
STAR
1988
c.3

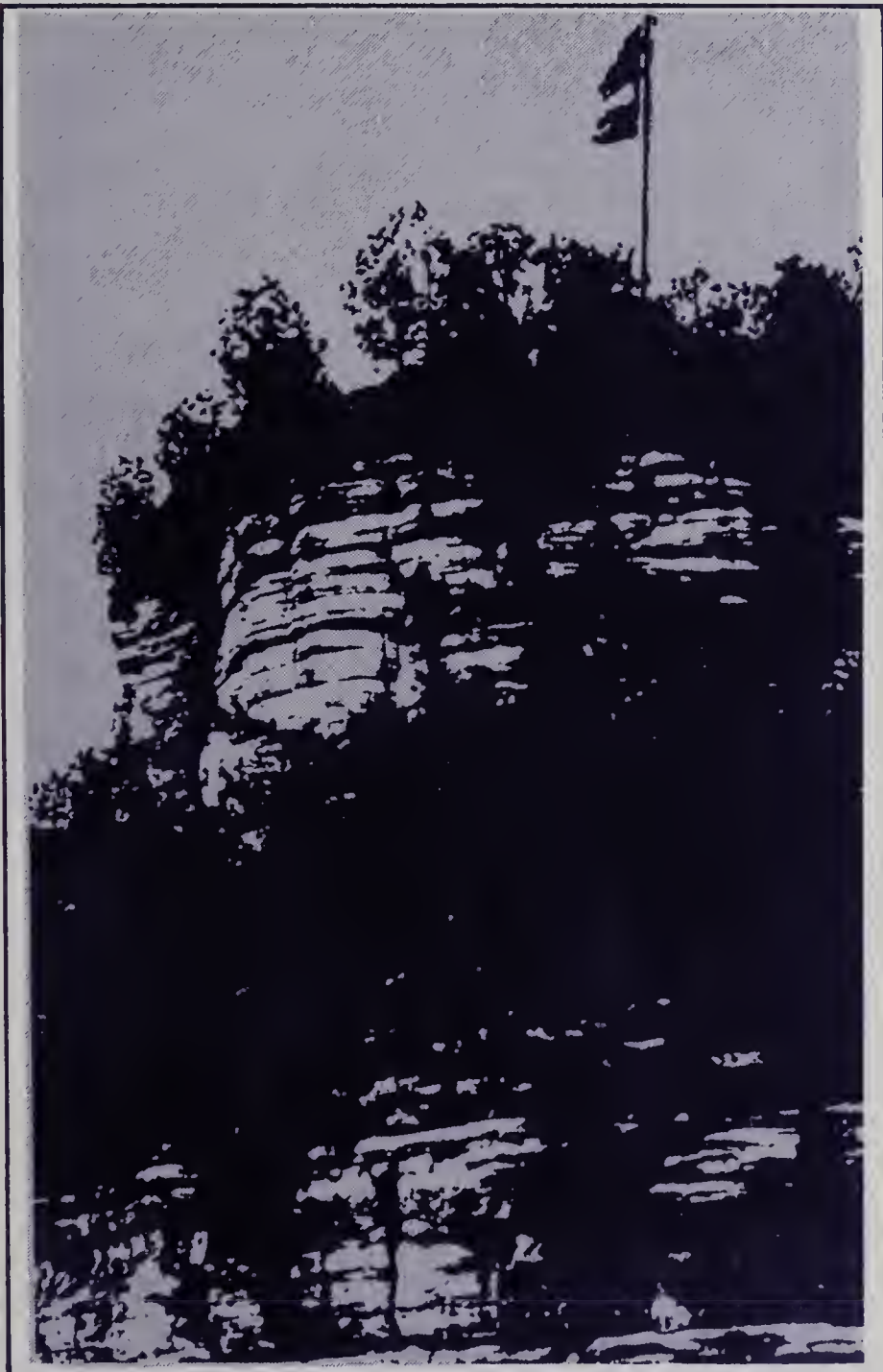
ILLINOIS
ILLINOIS STATE LIBRARY

OCT 26 1988

ILLINOIS DOCUMENTS

Starved Rock

STATE PARK



CONSERVATION

STARVED ROCK

Starved Rock State Park is located along the south side of the Illinois River, one mile south of Utica, midway between the cities of La Salle-Peru and Ottawa.

The park derived its name from an Indian legend that originated during the 1760s. Pontiac, chief of the Ottawa tribe which lived upriver from this area, was murdered by an Illinois Indian while he attended a tribal council in southern Illinois. A series of battles followed to avenge the death of the chief. The Potawatomi tribe, allies of the Ottawa tribe, fought a band of the Illinois in the area now known as Starved Rock State Park. Finally, according to the legend, the Illiniwek took refuge on top of the 125-foot sandstone butte where they were surrounded by the Ottawa-Potawatomi tribes and eventually starved. Hence, the name Starved Rock.

HISTORY — INDIAN INFLUENCE

Archaeologists report there is evidence that Archaic Indians lived within the park from 8000-900 B.C. During the following centuries the area was inhabited by the Hopewellian, Woodland, and Mississippian Indian cultures. Village sites and burial mounds have been mapped by archaeologists within the park.

The best known and possibly largest group of Indians to live in this area were the Illinois Indians. It is believed the Illinois, or Illiniwek, lived in this area from the 1500s to the 1700s. This tribe of 5,000-10,000 Indians were divided into sub-tribes. The Kaskaskias were a sub-tribe who had their village extending along the north bank of the river directly across from this park.

FRENCH INFLUENCE

In August, 1673, five French "Voyageurs" led by explorer Louis Jolliet and accompanied by Father Jacques Marquette, became the first known Europeans to enter this area. They canoed up the Illinois River from the Mississippi and stopped at the Kaskaskia village. Two years later, Father Marquette returned to the Kaskaskia village and founded the Mission of the Immaculate Conception, Illinois' first Christian mission.

Several years later, Rene Robert Cavelier Sieur de La Salle and his Lieutenant Henri de Tonti claimed the Mississippi Valley for France. Their objective was to build a chain of forts to confine the English colonies to the east coast. They built Fort St. Louis on top of Starved Rock in the winter of 1682-83. It commanded a strategic position as it towered above the last rapids in the Illinois River, thereby controlling a main passage from Canada to the south. Indians settled in great numbers near the fort to gain protection from the feared Iroquois tribe, and to be near a source of French trade goods.

In the early 1700's, while the Iroquois continued to raid the Illinois country, King Louis XIV of France suspended trading rights on the frontier. The Illinois decided to move south of Peoria for better hunting grounds and to escape the Iroquois raids. The French followed the Illiniwek to Peoria, where they built Fort Pimitoui. Fort St. Louis was then used as a refuge by traders and trappers until it was destroyed by fire around 1720.

RECENT HISTORY

During the 1800s there was a plan to make Starved Rock the "Gibraltar of the West." This venture was unsuccessful but the site was later developed as a vacation area complete with artesian-fed swimming pool, dance pavilion, and hotel. In 1911 the state purchased Starved Rock and adjacent acreage in order to develop a state park. Today the park has grown to 2,630 acres and is bordered by a 582-acre Nature Preserve to the west.

NATURAL FEATURES

Geology

Starved Rock State Park is well-known for its interesting rock formations. The formations are primarily of St. Peter's sandstone, which was laid down by a huge shallow inland sea over 425,000,000 years ago. These sedimentary rocks are formed by the consolidation of sediment for thousands of years at the bottom of the sea.

This sandstone was later brought to the surface as a result of a huge upfold known as the La Salle Anticline. The continual erosion of the surface during the intervening years has formed the flat surface of this general area.

Most of this flat land was glaciated several times during the past 700,000 years. A flat and gently rolling plain resulted and prairie formed after the last glacier. Most of the former prairie is now rich central Illinois farmland. The areas along the river and its tributaries are still predominantly forest.

The Illinois River Valley is a major exception to this flat land in the Starved Rock area. The valley was formed by a series of floods as glacial meltwaters broke through moraines, sending torrents of water surging across the land. The river eroded the sandstone and other sedimentary rocks to its present level.

The park's 18 canyons were formed as streams feeding to the Illinois River eroded through the glacial drift and into the sandstone. These streams cut channels through the rock as they followed the cracks and lines of weakness in the sedimentary rock. Waterfalls and vertical walls were formed as streams cut through rocks of varying resistance. Small streams are still cutting through the soft bedrock today.

During the early spring when the winter thaw is occurring and rains are frequent, waterfalls of varying sizes are found at the heads of all 18 canyons. After a good summer rain, the most popular and lasting waterfalls are found in St. Louis, French, La Salle, and Ottawa Canyons. The falls in St. Louis Canyon are spring fed and flow throughout the summer.

There are no true caves in the park but undercuts and cave-like depressions can be found in the sandstone throughout the area. An overhang results from the undercutting of a cliff by the river, a stream, or waterfall. The largest of these is Council Overhang, located at the east end of the park.

PLANTS AND ANIMALS

Starved Rock has a wide range of plant life, due in part to the geology and glacial history. This wide range of food and shelter leads to an abundant wildlife population.

The porous sandstone bluffs allow water to soak quickly through, only to collect in greater quantities on the slopes below. Red oak, basswood, and sugar maples are found on moist, sandy soils of north facing slopes. Woodchucks that feed on the lush undergrowth, and moles that eat insects found as they tunnel, burrow into this type of moist, sandy soil. Vireos and catbirds may be seen flying above the carpet of ferns and shrubs, such as witch hazel and wild hydrangea, in search of crawling insects. Trillium, dutchmen's breeches, and the large, white flower of the May apple are often seen in the spring. Tall, slender, purple-flowered spiderworts and the delicate five-petaled, five-branched bouquets of flowering spurge bloom as summer continues.

Cottonwoods, black willows, and ash trees are common along the Illinois River floodplain. Skunk cabbage, marsh marigolds, and wild iris are found in the marshy areas in spring. Wood ducks that nest in hollow trees can occasionally be seen paddling along the river's edge. Evidence of beaver and muskrats, water-dependent animals, can be seen as one walks along the River Trail.

The canyon vegetation is limited to lower orders of plant life because most plants cannot become rooted on the steep rock walls. Blue-green lichens, mosses, and ribbon-like liverworts prepare the way for ferns and flowering plants such as the delicate blue hare bell. The upside-down growing Canada yew, an inhabitant of the far north,, is also found in the cool canyon interiors. Rough-winged swallows and rock doves can be seen perching on the rock walls. Frogs, toads, and salamanders seek out the cool, moist canyon floors.

Black oak, red cedar, and white oak grow on the drier, sandy bluff tops. In addition, white pines and white cedar are found, brought this far south by the glaciers. Yellow-bellied sapsuckers drill parallel rows of small holes on cedar trees, and return to feed on sap and small insects. Shrubs that prefer a well-drained area are serviceberry and northern honeysuckle. Scarlet tanagers and cedar waxwings feed on their berries. The magenta blooms of shooting star and the nodding orange columbine are along the pathways in spring. As summer wears on, yellow partridge pea, violet spiked leadplant and purple, square-stemmed mint plants appear. Chipmunks, fox, and grey squirrels can be seen scampering in the forest gathering seeds and nuts.

Bur oaks and hickories predominate away from bluffs in deeper soils. Typical plants characteristic of the forest floor include the dwarf blueberry, American hazelnut, black huckleberry, and the bracken fern. Nuthatches and chickadees feed on nuts, seeds, and insects found in the bark of trees. Jack-in-the-pulpits, the many-petaled pastel colored hepatica, and delicate pink spring beauties blossom in spring in the shaded, moist soil. Black-eyed susans and pink spiked tick-trefoils will bloom in summer where the sun breaks through the canopy of trees. Raccoons and flying squirrels spend many hours searching for and gathering berries and nuts.

At the forest edge, bright blue indigo buntings flit through the wild crab apples and plums that skirt the former glacial till prairie. Cottontail rabbits scamper through the bluestem and Indian grasses. In the sandy prairie soil, prickly pear cactus is found in addition to lead plant, compass plant, and rattlesnake master. White-tailed deer come to munch on the sumac. Red-tailed hawks soar overhead in search of voles and field mice.

The poison ivy plant is found in all areas of the park. The white berries often seen on this plant are a prime source of food for birds.

ACTIVITIES

Hiking — Starved Rock has 20 miles of well-marked hiking trails. Extensive hiking information is available at the Visitor Center and park office. Trails are open year-round, but hikers must exercise caution near bluffs and stay on official park trails. Following unmarked trails, camping in unauthorized areas, rappelling, and rock climbing contribute to the destruction of canyon bluffs and other natural areas; violators are subject to fine. Unmarked areas are dangerous; numerous people have been seriously injured in this park. The official trails take hikers to areas best able to withstand man's presence.

Metal trail maps are located at all trail access points, trail intersections, and points of interest to give hikers an accurate idea of their location. There are colored dots along the trails on trees to assist hikers. These dots match the trail colors on the metal map signs and correspond to letter symbols on this trail map.

River Trail — R: Red on map and trees.

Bluff Trail — B: Brown on map and trees.

Interior Canyon Trails — I: Green on map and trees.

Connecting Trails — C: Green on map and trees.

There are also yellow dots on trees going away from the lodge, park office, main parking lot C, Visitor Center, and Starved Rock. White dots on trees mean hikers are returning to these areas. For your own safety, be off trails by dark. No horses or bikes are allowed on trails.

Picnicking — Picnic tables, drinking water, toilets, litter cans, and metal grills are provided at no charge.

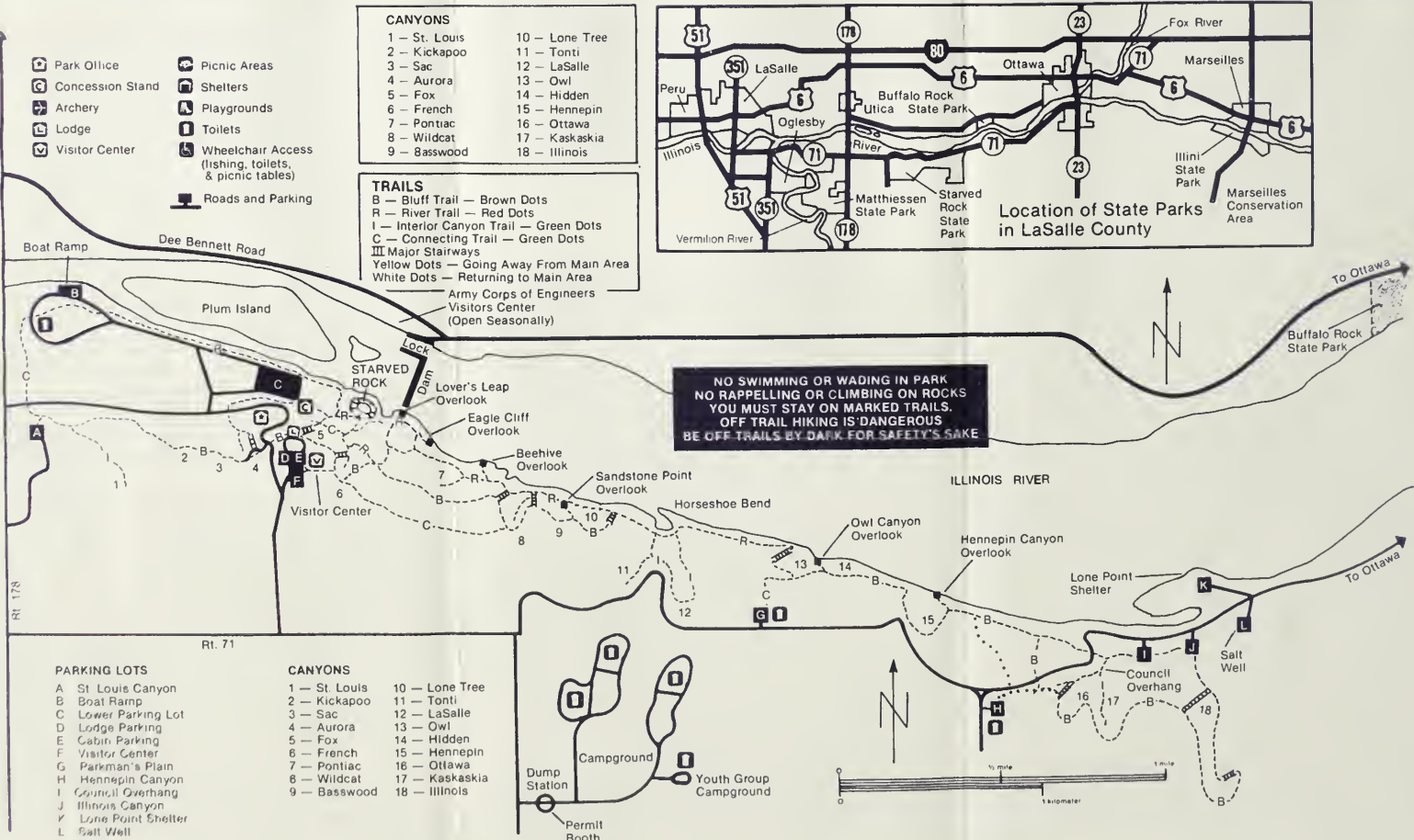
Please — Under no circumstances should anyone enter the river to wade or swim at any point. Boats are not allowed within 600 feet above or below the dam. Especially hazardous undertows are prevalent in the area between the dam and Starved Rock. In addition, swimming or wading is not allowed in any of the canyons or from any park shore. Many people have drowned in these areas. Such tragedies are unnecessary — stay out of the water!

Fishing — Fishing is generally good, but fishermen must stay 600 feet from the dam. Many fish can be caught in the Illinois River including: channel catfish from between the lock and dam, bullheads from the seawall, white bass from both ends of Plum Island, sauger and walleye from below the dam in fast water, carp from both banks, and crappie around the small Leopold Island.

Boating — Boats may be launched from the boat ramp at the west end of the park. There are canoe rentals in this area.

Winter Sports — An ice skating area is available at parking lot C.

Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing are available in the picnic area and at Matthiessen State Park. Tobogganing and sledding is possible east of parking lot C. Heated washrooms are accessible from these areas. Snowmobiling is not allowed anywhere in the park. Weather conditions may necessitate the closing of park roads.



FACILITIES

Visitor Center — Displays at the center relate the visitor to the park's cultural and natural history. The park interpreter posts a weekly schedule of activities and hours. Generally the center is open on weekend afternoons during peak visitor seasons. Schools and other organized groups may arrange reservations for volunteer work projects. Contact the center at (815) 667-4906 or write to Park Interpreter, Starved Rock State Park, Box 116, Utica, IL 61373. If the Visitor Center is closed, information may be obtained at the park office which is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Camping — The campground is open most of the year. However, it may be closed during winter or spring thaw due to road conditions. Camping permits may be obtained at the permit booth in the campground or park office. The campground has 133 sites available. All sites have electrical hookups; water is located throughout the area. Organized youth groups camp in a separate youth group area by permit. There are two shower buildings.

Horseback Riding and Camping — There are horseback riding trails and a horseback riders' campground along Highway 71 in the far western portion of the park. There are horse rentals available on weekends on Illinois Route 71, 1/2 mile west of Illinois Route 178.

Lodge — The stone and log lodge, built in part by the Civilian Conservation Corp in the 1930s, is situated on a high bluff just southwest of Starved Rock. The lodge offers 75 rooms that reflect a peaceful atmosphere of yesteryear. The rustic lounge has a large double fireplace. The pine-paneled lobby is available for public and private use. The Starved Rock Meeting Room can accommodate small or large groups. Indoor heated pool for lodge guests.

In addition to the lodge there are 12 cabins, all complete with baths, air conditioning, and connecting asphalt pathways. Lodging is available year-round. Those wishing reservations for rooms, cabins, or dining should call (815) 667-4211 or write Starved Rock Lodge, P.O. Box 471, Utica, IL 61373.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Groups of 25 or more persons will not be admitted to any state site unless permission from the site superintendent has been obtained to use the facilities. In addition, groups of minors must have adequate supervision and at least one responsible adult must accompany each group of 15 minors. All pets must be on a leash.

ILLINOIS STATE LIBRARY



3 1129 00491 1954

Numerous state sites are within easy access of every part of Illinois. Lodges, cabins, and dining rooms are important features of Illinois Beach, Starved Rock, Pere Marquette, and Giant City; White Pines Forest and Cave-In-Rock have cabins and dining rooms only. Reservations for lodging should be made with lodge managers.

Most state sites are open year-round, except on Christmas and New Year's Day. When weather conditions necessitate the closing of roads during freezing and thawing periods, access to facilities is by foot only.

For more details on this site, contact the Site Superintendent, Starved Rock State Park, Box 116, Utica, IL 61373, phone (815) 667-4726. For information on other sites, write the Illinois Department of Conservation, Division of Land Management, 524 South Second Street, Springfield, IL 62706.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA



3 0112 122557108



**Illinois
Department of
Conservation**
life and land together